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Scolding does not equate provocation to take own life: SC

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Mcap of 4 top firms jumps Rs 1 lakh crore

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PSG routs Inter to win first CL title

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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PHOTO: PTI

Bangladesh charges Hasina with mass murder

DHAKA, 1 JUNE

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal on Sunday indicted former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and two others on several charges, including mass murder, for their alleged role in the violent crackdown on student-led protests last year. Sunday's proceedings marked the start of Hasina's trial in absentia nearly 10 months after the ouster of her government following the protests. The proceedings of the tribunal were broadcast live on television for the first time in Bangladesh's history. The tribunal simultaneously issued a fresh arrest warrant against Hasina and then home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal. The third accused, the then inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, is in custody to stand trial in person. If convicted, they could face the death penalty. *—PTI*

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Israel guns down 31 Palestinians en route to aid hub

RAFAH/TEL AVIV 1 JUNE

At least 31 people were killed and scores were wounded on Sunday as they were on their way to receive food in the Gaza Strip, according to health officials and multiple witnesses. The witnesses said Israeli forces fired on crowds around a kilometre away from an aid site run by an Israeli and US-backed foundation. The Israeli Army however released a brief statement saying it was "currently unaware of injuries caused by (Israeli military) fire within the Humanitarian Aid distribution site." The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation 's distribution of aid has been marred by chaos. Before Sunday, at least six people had been killed and more than 50 wounded according to local health officials. *—PTI*

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IndiGo, Delta, Air France and Virgin Atlantic tie-up

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

IndiGo, Delta Air Lines, Air France-KLM, and Virgin Atlantic have announced a strategic partnership to strengthen air connectivity between India, Europe, and North America. The alliance, revealed at a press briefing in Delhi, aims to enhance cooperation across network planning, loyalty programmes, cargo, sales, and non-commercial areas such as sustainability, training, and ground handling. Under a newly signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the airlines will collaborate bilaterally and multilaterally to tap into growing international travel demand. IndiGo, India's largest airline, plans to launch flights to 10 new international destinations by March 2026. IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers called the partnership a key step in the airline's ambition to become a global carrier by 2030. Virgin Atlantic and Air France-KLM already have codeshare agreements with IndiGo since 2022. Delta CEO Ed Bastian announced plans to resume India operations, with direct Atlanta–Delhi flights expected in the coming years, pending government approvals. *—PTI*

A woman carries her pregnant dog through a waterlogged street in Imphal, Manipur, while residents wade through flood-affected areas on the outskirts of Agartala, Tripura, following heavy rainfall on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

30 dead, many displaced as rains drown Northeast

Red alert issued; Assam and Arunachal worst-hit

78K

people are displaced, with 41,600 impacted in Lakhimpur alone.

GUWAHATI/ITANAGAR, 1 JUNE

Northeast India is reeling under the onslaught of relentless monsoon rains that have triggered devastating floods and landslides across several states, killing at least 30 people and displacing thousands. With the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing red alerts across the region, the situation remains grim and is likely to worsen in the coming days.

In Assam, at least eight people have died, including three from a single family in Guwahati, who were buried in a mudslide. The state has witnessed flooding in multiple areas, leading to long power outages and the shutdown of schools and colleges over the weekend. Electricity supply was cut in several areas to minimise the risk of electrocution

Assam government announced ex-gratia of Rs 4 lakh each to families of people killed. The PTI reported that 17 districts in Assam, especially Lakhimpur, have been badly affected. Relief camps have been set up, but many are proving insufficient due to the overwhelming number of evacuees. Two deaths were also confirmed in Golaghat, while one was reported in Lakhimpur. 10 major rivers flew above the danger level.

In Arunachal Pradesh, at least nine people have lost their lives, most buried under debris from landslides triggered by the torrential downpour.

The Arunachal Pradesh government has announced ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh each for the next of kin of the nine people,.

Mizoram reported the death of five individuals, including three Myanmarese refugees who had sought shelter in the state following the military coup in their country. They were killed after a landslide submerged their home on Saturday.

Meghalaya reported six deaths. Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma has urged emergency teams to stay on high alert, particularly in landslide-prone and low-lying areas, as the state continues to battle waterlogging and power outages.

In Tripura, at least one person died in Agartala after falling into an open manhole as the city was battered by a record 200 mm of rainfall in just three hours on Saturday night. A 16-year-old boy drowned in Jirania in West Tripura. Tripura's Chief Minister Manik Saha said that 1,300 families had taken shelter in relief camps. Over 5,000 residents are now housed in 27 camps. *—PTI*

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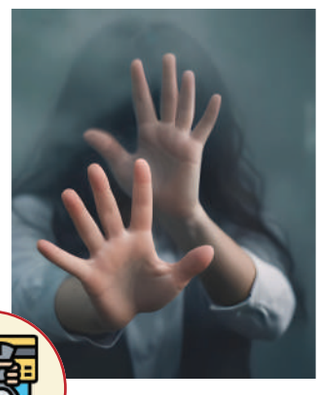
USED VIDEO FOR BLACKMAIL

6 rape Belagavi girl as boyfriend lures her to hills

BELAGAVI, 1 JUNE



Police in Belagavi have arrested five individuals, including two juveniles, in connection with the horrific gang-rape of a minor girl, with a sixth suspect still at large. The perpetrators allegedly filmed the initial assault to blackmail the victim.

Belagavi City Police Commissioner Borase Bhushan Gulabrao confirmed an FIR has been registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act at the APMC Police Station.

The 15-year-old victim filed a complaint on Saturday, revealing she was repeatedly raped and threatened with a video of the initial assault. According to police, the ordeal began six months ago when the girl was lured to a hilly area by her boyfriend, where she was gang-raped and filmed.

The footage was then used to blackmail her into a second assault in January, involving three individuals at a different location. The victim, initially too terrified to inform her parents, was subjected to ongoing harassment and death threats, with the accused threatening to viralise the video if she did not comply.

Overwhelmed by fear, the girl finally confided in her parents, leading to the formal complaint and swift police action. Five arrests were made within 24 hours of the report, and the search continues for the remaining accused.

—Salar News with Agencies

Russia loses 40 jets in Ukraine strike

KYIV, 1 JUNE

Ukraine launched one of its largest drone operations against Russia to date, reportedly destroying over 40 military aircraft in a coordinated strike deep into Russian territory, a Ukrainian security official told the Associated Press on Sunday.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the attack was personally supervised by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and took over a year and a half to plan and execute. Codenamed "Pavutyna" (Spider Web), the operation targeted airbases far from the frontlines, aiming to degrade Russia's long-range strike capabilities.

Strikes reportedly hit airbases in Belaya (eastern Siberia), Olenya (Arctic region near Finland), Ivanovo, and Dyagilevo, both east of Moscow. The Irkutsk regional governor confirmed a drone attack on a military unit in Sridni, marking the first Ukrainian strike in Siberia. Russian broadcaster RT released video footage of the strike.

The aircraft destroyed are Tu-95 and Tu-22M3 bombers *PHOTO: X*

The aircraft destroyed are Tu-95 and Tu-22M3 bombers, and at least one A-50 early warning aircraft, according to sources cited by Kyiv Independent. A large fire broke out at the Belaya airbase following the strike.

The drones were reportedly hidden in mobile wooden sheds mounted on cargo trucks, with roofs opening remotely to launch the drones toward their targets. If confirmed, this would mark Ukraine's most damaging drone attack of the war, delivering a major setback to Russia's strategic air fleet. Meanwhile, President Zelenskyy confirmed that Ukraine has accepted Russia's proposal for fresh peace talks in Istanbul on Monday. *—PTI*

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Air India to drop Turkish jet maintenance firm

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Air India will look to send its wide-body planes, whose heavy maintenance is being done by Turkish Technic, to other maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) entities, as part of recalibrating its plans taking into cognisance the recent developments related to Turkiye.

The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security revoked the security clearance for Turkish company Celebi Airport Services India Pvt Ltd in the "interest of national security".

On 30 May, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation granted a three-month extension to IndiGo on damp leasing of two Boeing 777 aircraft from Turkish Airlines till 31 August, directing it to terminate the lease within this period.

On Air India's wide-body aircraft being sent to Turkish Technic for maintenance works, Air India CEO and MD, Campbell Wilson said it is a global business and a global supply chain.

Heavy maintenance works of some of the airline's wide-body B777s and B787s are done by Turkey-based Turkish Technic. *—PTI*

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STALIN LAUNCHES DMK'S POLL CAMPAIGN

MADURAI, 1 JUNE

Ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections, DMK President and Chief Minister MK Stalin has announced a new party membership enrolment initiative titled "Oraniyil Tamil Nadu." This initiative, unveiled at the party's general council meeting, aims to conduct door-to-door campaigns to inform citizens about the government's welfare schemes and advocate for the state's rights. Stalin proposed setting a target of enrolling at least 30 per cent of voters in each polling station, a resolution that was unanimously adopted. He highlighted that nearly every household in Tamil Nadu benefits from schemes. *—PTI*

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DMK President MK Stalin being felicitated during the party's Madurai meet on Sunday

AFTER RAKESH SHARMA

Shubhanshu will be 2nd Indian to go to space

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Shubhanshu Shukla is poised to make history as he prepares for his inaugural spaceflight aboard Axiom Space's fourth commercial mission to the International Space Station (ISS). Scheduled for launch on 8 June, the spacecraft will lift off from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, USA.

This momentous flight makes Shukla only the second Indian to venture into space, following Rakesh Sharma's iconic mission aboard Russia's Soyuz spacecraft in 1984. The Dragon spacecraft is set to launch at approximately 6.41pm IST, with Shukla serving as the mission pilot alongside crew members Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski from Poland and Tibor Kapu from Hungary, both of whom will also make their maiden journeys to the ISS.

IAF pilot Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla has been named pilot for Axiom Mission 4 *PHOTO: X/@AXIOM SPACE*

Veteran astronaut Peggy Whitson will command the Axiom-4 mission. Shukla expressed immense excitement about experiencing microgravity and conducting scientific experiments during the 14-day mission. He will focus on food and nutrition experiments developed through collaboration between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), and NASA.

Among the planned experiments, Shukla will work with traditional Indian crops, including methi (fenugreek) and moong (green gram), assessing their growth under microgravity conditions. He anticipates sharing his journey with fellow Indians, stating, "This is the journey of 1.4 billion people."

The Axiom-4 mission, costing Rs 550 crore, is seen as a precursor to India's Gaganyaan mission, slated for 2027, utilising insights gained from this pioneering flight. *—PTI*

Fungi on food, expired goods: Zepto's licence suspended

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has suspended Zepto's food business licence for not complying with food safety standards.

FDA recently visited the Zepto's warehouse in Mumbai's Dharavi area for an inspection, only to discover the products being stored near stagnant water, with fungus growing on food items and expired products stored with the good ones. The cold storage temperatures were not maintained and the floors of the warehouse were wet and dirty, with food items stored in a disorganised and unhygienic manner. The regulatory body carried out the inspection in the warehouse after receiving information from Minister of State for Food and Drug Administration, Yogesh Kadam. .

Zepto Private Limited is a quick-service online delivery platform.

Meanwhile, Zepto has issued a statement that maintaining the highest standards of food safety and hygiene was non-negotiable for it. The company was trying to rectify the lapses and strengthen its processes to provide the best and safest quality of products to consumers.

It said that necessary corrective measures were being taken to resume operations in accordance with regulatory obligations. The company has also initiated an internal review, cooperating with the authorities concerned to ensure a complete and swift compliance with the food safety standards. The quick delivery platform had been drawing attention for the wrong reasons since the past few months. *—Agencies*

SHOP GUTTED IN BLAZE

An oil shop on JC Road was gutted in a fire that broke out late Saturday night, causing damage estimated at Rs 1 crore
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Modi should stop using Op Sindoor for politics: Kharge

'Sometimes those in power should keep their mouth shut'

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

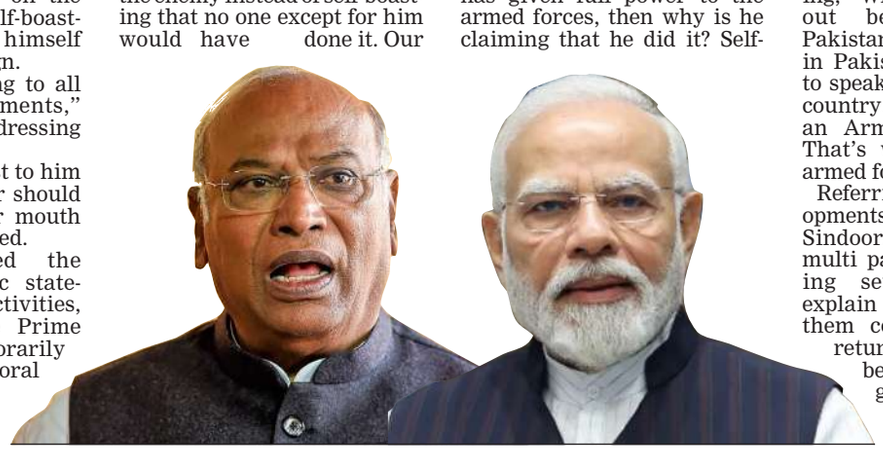
Commenting on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public speeches after Operation Sindoor, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge urged him to "focus on the enemy instead of self-boasting" and to recuse himself from election campaign.

"I don't like reacting to all his (Modi's) statements," Kharge said while addressing reporters in City.

"But my only request to him is that those in power should sometimes keep their mouth shut," Kharge remarked.

Kharge questioned the Modi's recent public statements and political activities, suggesting that the Prime Minister should temporarily step back from electoral campaigning.

"Modi should recuse himself from elections and focus on the country. He should understand whatever has happened in the country and speak," he remarked. "I am saying without any political differences that he (Modi) should focus on the enemy instead of self-boasting that no one except for him would have done it. Our full support is with the Armed Forces".



The Congress chief also took a swipe at the Prime Minister's earlier assertion that the military had been given a free hand. "When Modi has said he has given full power to the armed forces, then why is he claiming that he did it? Self-boasting is not good."

Emphasising the need for political restraint during sensitive times, Kharge cited Pakistan's Parliament during previous India-Pakistan tensions, stating, "When the clashes broke out between India and Pakistan, a discussion started in Pakistan's Parliament not to speak anything against the country....So long as there is an Army, we all are safe. That's why we support the armed forces".

Referring to ongoing developments linked to Operation Sindoor, Kharge noted that multi party delegations visiting several countries to explain India's position. "Let them come back. Till they return, it is not proper to be touring around and giving speeches," he said.

—PTI

COMMUNAL HATRED

BJP leader booked for threatening to 'massacre Muslims'

KALABURAGI, 1 JUNE

A case has been registered against Manikanta Narendra Rathod for uploading a provocative video on Facebook which said that "the Muslim community should be "uprooted completely" and that those accused of "Love Jihad" should be killed within eight days.

In the video shared on his Facebook account that has since gone viral, Rathod said that if police in Kalaburagi are held back for just 15 minutes, Muslims can be massacred collectively.

Following this provocative and communal statement, a complaint was filed on Saturday by Syed Aleem Ilahi and an FIR registered by the police at the Central Police Station (CEN Station).

In the video, Rathod is heard making the threats in the Lambani language, calling for the extermination of Muslims and the killing of alleged 'Jihadists' within eight days, all of which is framed in a way that could incite religious conflict.

30-year old Rathod is no stranger to conflict. On 26 May, a case had already been filed against him at Chittapur police station for alleged remarks against Minister Priyank Kharge.

"Rathod allegedly uploaded a provocative video on Facebook" Sharanappa SD Commissioner of Kalaburagi told Salar News.

Notably, Rathod had contested the previous Assembly elections from the Chittapur Constituency as a BJP candidate, where he was defeated by Congress leader Priyank Kharge.

—Salar News

KVP warns City theatre against 'Thug Life'

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

A pro-Kannada organisation, Karnataka Rakshana Vedike, attempted to lay siege to the theatre in Kamakshipalya, Bengaluru, to restrict the release of Kamal Haasan's 'Thug Life' on Sunday. Praveen Shetty of the Karnataka Rakshana Vedike (KRV) warned the owners of Victory Cinema Theatre in Kamakshipalya not to release Kamal Haasan's 'Thug Life'. The move comes after actor said that "Kannada is born out of Tamil". This led to several protests by the pro-Kannada organisations and the ban by the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce (KFCC) over the release of the movie 'Thug Life'. Praveen Shetty said, "Haasan has spoken against the Kannada language. We will not allow Haasan's film to be released in Karnataka. They said that the film will be released at the Victory Cinema so we came here today and told the theatre owners not to release the film. It should not be released in Karnataka. If the film is released, the government will be held responsible for any untoward incidents that follow." *—PTI*

NGT issues notice to Centre as pan masala companies flout rules

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

The National Green Tribunal has sought a reply from the Centre regarding the strict enforcement of the Plastic Waste Management Rules by the manufacturers of gutkha, pan masala and tobacco products.

A bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava and expert member A Senthil Vel noted the submissions of the petitioner, that in October 2021, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) issued certain directions to 25 such manufacturers, including immediately closing down operations until they switched to environmentally sound alternatives, which were not complied with.

The bench, in its order dated 30 May, noted that according to the counsel, Anuj Aggarwal, certain provisions of the plastic waste management rules were being flouted.

These included the clause that "sachets using plastic material shall not be used for storing, packing or selling gutkha, tobacco and pan masala" and "plastic material, in any form including vinyl acetate, maleic acid, vinyl chloride copolymer (used in plastic coating) shall not be used in any package for packaging gutkha, pan masala and tobacco in all forms", the bench noted.

It also noted the submission that these manufacturers were not complying with the Extended Producers' Responsibility regime under the Plastic Waste Management Rules, which stipulated environmentally sound management of products, particularly at the end of their life cycle.

The respondents are the Centre, Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board and some pan masala and supari manufacturers. *—PTI*

STAYING FIT

Volunteers take part in a marathon and cyclothon to mark World Bicycle Day organised by Vikasana Foundation at Jayanagar in Bengaluru on Sunday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

FESTIVITIES BEGIN

Sheep and goats from various districts across the State arrived at Chamrajpet Idgah Maidan in Bengaluru on Sunday for sale ahead of Eid-ul-Adha, which will be celebrated on 7 June
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

DKS: Projects worth Rs 1L cr planned for City

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

Stating that Congress party had done more for Bengaluru's development than other parties, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Sunday said that projects worth Rs 1 lakh crore have been planned for the City.

Speaking at a meeting of Dasarahalli Assembly constituency leaders and workers, he said, "It was not the BJP which built the flyover on Tumkur Road, Airport Road, Hosur Road and Kolar Road. It was Manmohan Singh government which granted these projects."

"The BJP was in power in the state before us for 4 years, yet never came up with any schemes like guarantee schemes. BJP is about more noise and little action. Our candidate Manjanna had lost the election here, yet he has got e-khatha done for 8,000 families," he alleged.

"When I took oath as the KPCC President, I had said that Congress party will come to power if the youth and women of the State make up their mind. We came to power and we decided to repay their debt with five guarantee schemes. Our government has delivered as promised." *—PTI*

Cong MLC asks govt to bear farm loan interests

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

- In a letter, he said that if the Apex Bank is to borrow beyond what the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has allocated, it would have to pay an addition 4 per cent interest

Congress MLC Dinesh Gooligowda wrote a letter to the top brass of the Karnataka government asking it to bear the costs if any additional costs the NABARD incurs.

In the letter, he said that if the Apex Bank is to borrow beyond what the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has allocated, it would have to pay an addition 4 per cent interest.

"Last year, NABARD provided RS 5,450 crore loan to the State Apex Bank at 4 per cent interest rate," he wrote. "This facilitated district Apex and DCC Banks to provide loans to farmers. However, this time NABARD has limited the loan amount to the Apex Bank at 4 per cent interest to Rs 2,700 crore.

"For the Agriculture Department to meet its sowing targets, it is necessary to provide farmers with adequate credit facilities at zero interest rates in a timely manner," he said.

He said this will enable the State's Apex, DCC Banks and Primary Societies to conduct business sustainably and provide necessary services to farmers.

—Salar News

HEMAVATHI LINK CANAL

FIRs registered after Tumakuru farmers' protest turns violent

TUMAKURU, 1 JUNE

At least 11 FIRs were registered in Gubbi police station in Tumakuru district, after a farmers' protest turned violent, police said on Sunday.

Tensions ran high in Gubbi taluk on Saturday as the farmers' protested against the Hemavathi Link Canal project escalated into violence.

The protest, which saw participation from Opposition leaders and farmer groups, was aimed at halting the ongoing canal work that locals allege threatens the water needs of Tumakuru's agricultural heartland.

Police said FIRs have been registered against several key protestors, including Tumakuru Rural BJP MLA B Suresh Gowda, BJP leader SD Dilip Kumar, and JD(S) leader Nagaraju.

Police registered FIRs against Opposition leaders for protesting the Hemavathi Link Canal, with more FIRs to follow
PHOTO: X

More FIRs are expected in the coming days, particularly against individuals involved in vandalism and violence, including stone pelting.

Gubbi Congress MLA SR Srinivas on Sunday backed the sentiments of local farmers. "This is not the right move. The canal already carries water smoothly to Bugudanahalli. Why create unnecessary trouble and waste money?" *—PTI*

7 yr old dies in Mandya, triggering protests

MYSURU, 1 JUNE

A seven-year-old girl died in Mandya on Sunday after a granite slab fell on her leg. Following her death, protests erupted outside the hospital where she was treated, alleging medical negligence.

According to police, Sanvi, daughter of Ranjitha and Ningaraju of Nellur village of Malavalli taluk was admitted to Mandya Institute of Medical Sciences (MIMS) after a granite slab fell on her leg on 29 May. Despite a successful surgery on Sunday, she suddenly died due to multiple organ failure on Sunday, triggering protests outside the hospital.

The protesters, joined by the parents and other organisations, claimed she was operated on by intern doctors and demanded justice.

Police ordered a third-party investigation and postmortem the KR hospital in Mysore.

—Salar News

Punjab police dismantle terror, extortion module

CHANDIGARH, 1 JUNE

The Punjab Police have announced dismantling of a terror and extortion module linked to a member of the banned outfit Babbar Khalsa International. Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav confirmed the arrest of two associates, Karajpreet Singh from Verowal and Gurlal Singh, alias Harman, from Goindwal Sahib in Tarn Taran. The alleged mastermind, Jeevan Fauji, orchestrated an extortion scheme focused on individuals in Punjab's border districts, reportedly targeting a furniture shop owner with connections in Canada. Fauji supplied a 30 bore pistol to his associates, instructing them to open fire at shop. A police operation aimed at recovering weapon, Gurlal Singh fired at police, resulting in a retaliatory response that left him injured. —*PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Traitors driving wedge between Tejashwi & me: Tej

PATNA, 1 JUNE

Speaking on his expulsion from RJD, Tej Pratap Yadav on Sunday alleged that there was a "conspiracy" to drive a wedge between him and his younger brother Tejashwi Yadav. Tej Pratap said that he would always support Tejashwi, who he requested to take care of his parents as Jaichand (traitor) was outside and within. Tez Pratap's was expelled after he confessed to being "in a relationship" with a woman. His estranged wife Aishwarya alleged that he had been in a relationship with another woman even before their marriage. Anushka's, brother Aakash Yadav condemned Tez Pratap's expulsion, urging Tejashwi to intervene in the matter. His expulsion came barely a few months ahead of the Bihar assembly polls.—*PTI*

Ajit admits 'mistakes' in Ladki Bahin enrollment

PUNE, 1 JUNE

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Sunday said he will check the arms licences issued in Pune district over the past few years and whether the recipients actually need them. 659 arm licences were issued in Pune between 2021 and 2023. Admitting "mistakes" in the enrolment of some beneficiaries under the state government's flagship Ladki Bahin Yojana Pawar said that the money disbursed would not be taken back. Devendra Fadnavis dispensation will recover Rs 3.58 crore from 2652 women government employees who availed benefits under the 'Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin' scheme despite being illegible. The government launched the scheme in 2024, under which eligible women between 21-65 years are entitled to a monthly assistance of Rs 1,500. —*PTI*

LJP (RV) hints Chirag Paswan will contest Bihar polls

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

The Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) is likely to convene a meeting of its executive members to formalize a proposal urging its president and Union minister Chirag Paswan to contest the upcoming Bihar assembly elections. Its leaders had met on 30 May in Bihar's Bikramganj to back the idea. The members wanted Paswan to contest from a general category seat if he contests the assembly polls instead of a constituency reserved for the scheduled castes. This is aimed at reinforcing his acceptance outside his core constituency, projecting him as a leader with wide appeal. Bihar is central to Paswan's politics and he has repeatedly spoken about his vision for the state's development.—*PTI*

Didi opposing Op Sindoor to appease minorities: Shah

TMC seeks Shah's resignation over Pahalgam security lapses

KOLKATA, 1 JUNE

Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday launched a blistering attack on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, accusing her of "stooping low" by opposing Operation Sindoor and the Waqf Amendment Act to appease the Muslim vote bank, and alleging that the Murshidabad riots were "state-sponsored".

Shah, addressing party leaders and workers here, gave a call to uproot the TMC government from power in next year's assembly polls, asserting that the tenure of Banerjee as the CM will end in 2026.

"To appease the Muslim vote bank, Mamata didi opposed Operation Sindoor. By doing so, she is insulting the mothers and sisters of this country. You have not opposed the military operation, you have played with the lives of crores of mothers and sisters. I have come to appeal to women of Bengal to explain the value of sindoor (vermillion) to those who are against Operation Sindoor, in the upcoming (assembly) elections," he said.

Banerjee had recently accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP of trying to exploit Operation Sindoor – the Centre's military response to the April 22 Pahalgam terrorist attack – for political gains.

The home minister alleged that senior TMC leaders were complicit in the violence in Murshidabad in April, which broke out during protests over the contentious Waqf Amendment Act.

Union Home Minister and senior BJP leader Amit Shah addresses an organisational meeting of the party at Netaji Indoor Stadium in Kolkata
PHOTO: PTI

The Home Minister also accused the ruling TMC of facilitating illegal cross-border movement.

Responding to the TMC's criticism of the BSF's inability to stop infiltration, the senior BJP leader said the Mamata Banerjee-led government has not given the required land to the BSF.

Meanwhile, TMC on Sunday launched a scathing counter-attack on Union Home Minister Amit Shah over him accusing the West Bengal government of encouraging illegal infiltration, and asserted that border security is the responsibility of the BSF, which operates under Centre.

Addressing a press conference in Kolkata, senior TMC leader and state Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya demanded Shah's resignation, alleging that he had failed to prevent the recent terror attack in Pahalgam in which 26 people were killed. – *PTI*

Defence Ministry announces essay competition on Operation Sindoor

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Ministry of Defence has announced an essay competition focused on Operation Sindoor, running from 1 June to 30 June. Announced via social media platform X, the top three winners will each receive a cash prize of Rs 10,000 and an exclusive invitation to the 78th Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort in Delhi.

Launched in May, Operation Sindoor aims to dismantle nine terrorist infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in response to deadly Pahalgam terror attack. —*PTI*

81 'anti-nationals' held in Assam after Pahalgam terror attack

GUWAHATI, 1 JUNE

Assam's Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced the arrest of two more individuals accused of being "anti-nationals," raising the total to 81 since the Pahalgam terror attack in April. The latest arrests occurred in Sonitpur and Kamrup districts, with Sarma stating that the suspects sympathised with Pakistan. Earlier, opposition AIUDF MLA Aminul Islam faced sedition charges for allegedly defending Pakistan's involvement in the attack, and after being granted bail, was detained under the National Security Act. On 22 April, a terror attack in Pahalgam, mainly tourists. In a parallel development, police in Poonch detained a man for allegedly misusing social media to incite unrest. —*PTI*

Indian delegations reinforce zero tolerance for terrorism

BRASILIA, 1 JUNE

A series of all-party parliamentary delegations from India are currently engaging with global leaders to express the nation's unwavering resolve against terrorism, particularly following a recent deadly attack in Pahalgam.

Led by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, an Indian delegation arrived in Brazil to meet with senior officials, including Celso Amorim, Head Adviser to the Brazilian President. Discussions aim to underscore India's firm stance on terrorism and enhance international collaboration, especially related to cross-border offences linked to Pakistan.

In Malaysia, Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee made a bold statement, asserting future talks with Pakistan should focus solely on reclaiming Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, citing recent violence against Indian nationals. He emphasised the need for a strong diaspora presence in supporting Kashmir's economy.

Meanwhile, a delegation led by DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi visited Spain to advocate for #ZeroTolerance ForTerrorism, while BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad's group is in the UK to meet community leaders and parliamentarians to discuss India's efforts and manage regional tensions following the April terror incident.

These diplomatic missions are part of India's broader strategy to fortify global alliances against terrorism, with delegations set to engage in 33 capitals worldwide in response to the escalation of hostilities in the region. – *PTI*

Led by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, an Indian delegation arrived in Brazil to meet with senior officials, Celso Amorim, and Head Adviser to the Brazilian President
PHOTO: ANI

Congress calls for special parl session following CDS remarks

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

The Congress party has demanded an immediate special session of Parliament to discuss military and foreign policy strategies following comments made by Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan.

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh expressed concern over the Prime Minister and Defence Minister not briefing opposition leaders on General Chauhan's statements made in Singapore regarding Operation Sindoor.

General Chauhan reportedly acknowledged tactical adjustments and deep strikes into Pakistani territory after recent military clashes, dismissing Islamabad's claim of downing Indian jets. Ramesh questioned why such critical information was disclosed abroad rather than in a domestic all-party meeting, underlining the necessity for a comprehensive discussion on India's defence preparedness.

The Congress also reiterated calls for an independent review committee similar to the one established after the Kargil War. Congress media chief Pawan Khera stressed the need for clarity on the ceasefire circumstances and the implications of the CDS's remarks.

Congress Deputy Leader in the Rajya Sabha, Pramod Tiwari, echoed the sentiment, stating that the public deserves cohesive answers regarding the armed conflict, as inconsistencies in the government's narratives have led to widespread confusion. – *PTI*

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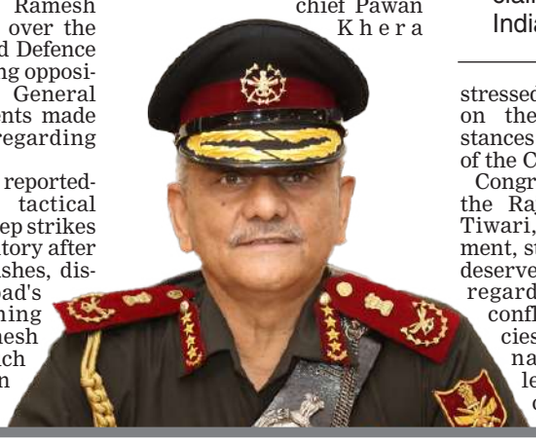


'EVERYTHING FOR EVERYONE'

Stalin launches DMK's poll campaign

MADURAI, 1 JUNE

Ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections, DMK President and Chief Minister **MK Stalin** has announced a new party membership enrolment initiative titled "Oraniyil Tamil Nadu."

This initiative, unveiled at the party's general council meeting, aims to conduct door-to-door campaigns to inform citizens about the government's welfare schemes and advocate for the state's rights.

Stalin proposed setting a target of enrolling at least 30 per cent of voters in each polling station, a resolution that was unanimously adopted. He highlighted that nearly every household in Tamil Nadu benefits from welfare schemes of the Dravidian model government, which operates under the motto of "everything for everyone." He urged that all families join forces to prepare for upcoming election.

"This general council resolves to undertake this membership enrolment initiative, ensuring we protect Tamil Nadu's rights without compromise," Stalin stated. The "Oraniyil Tamil Nadu" initiative can be interpreted as the state coming together as a unified entity.

Stalin instructed party workers to actively reach out to residences, detailing the array of welfare schemes and addressing the state's rights. The goal is for all party functionaries, including district and local officials, to complete their targets within two months.

The meeting was held at a newly constructed 20-acre site on Melur Road, designed to reflect the DMK headquarters in Chennai. At the event, Stalin unfurled the party flag atop a 100-foot mast and led a 22-kilometre roadshow, receiving a warm welcome from party workers and the public. – *PTI*

- "Oraniyil Tamil Nadu" initiative, unveiled at the party's general council meeting, aims to conduct door-to-door campaigns to inform citizens about the government's welfare schemes and advocate for the state's rights.

Abbas Ansari disqualified as MLA over hate speech

LUCKNOW, 1 JUNE

Abbas Ansari, the Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) MLA representing the Mau assembly constituency, has been disqualified from the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly after being sentenced to two years in prison for a hate speech offence, officials confirmed on Sunday. This decision has resulted in the declaration of the Mau seat as vacant.

Under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, a member's legislative membership can be terminated if they receive a court sentence of two years or more. Abbas Ansari, son of the notorious gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari, first secured his seat in the 2022 elections as part of Samajwadi Party-led coalition.

The SBSP currently aligns with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party-led coalition, with party president Om Prakash Rajbhar serving as a cabinet minister in Uttar Pradesh. Other disqualified MLAs from the current 18th Legislative Assembly include notable figures such as Azam Khan and his son Abdullah Khan, both from the Samajwadi Party.

Additional disqualifications include SP MLA Haji Irfan Solanki, BJP MLA Vikram Singh Saini, and Ramdular Gond. This pattern of disqualifications highlights ongoing legal issues faced by various politicians in the region. – *PTI*

Bihar transfers 45 IAS officers in major reshuffle

PATNA, 1 JUNE

In a significant bureaucratic shake-up ahead of the upcoming assembly elections, the Bihar government has transferred 45 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers, including several district magistrates (DMs). This move is part of a broader effort to streamline governance, as the state gears up for polls later this year.

The General Administration Department issued the transfer order on Saturday, which also included the reallocation of 31 officers from the Bihar Administrative Service (BAS). Among the changes, Patna DM Chandrasekhar Singh, an IAS officer from the 2010 batch, has been appointed as the Commissioner of the Patna division. Gaya DM Thyagarajan SM, of the 2011 batch, will now take over as the DM of Patna.

Additionally, Mayank Warwade, the former Commissioner of the Patna division, has been named State Project Director of the Bihar Education Project Council. Rajeev Raushan, previously the DM of Darbhanga, has been designated as Commissioner of the Saran division, while Avneesh Kumar Singh and Raj Kumar will serve as Commissioners of the Munger and Tirhut divisions, respectively.

The state government also appointed Vishwanath Rishi as chairperson of the Mahadalit Commission and Devendra Kumar as vice-chairperson of the Scheduled Caste Commission. – *PTI*

AHEAD OF CIVIC POLLS

Shiv Sena (UBT) turns to AI to revive, rebrand party

MUMBAI, 1 JUNE

From recreating Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray's voice to developing an Artificial Intelligence anchor for its mouthpiece Saamana, the Shiv Sena (UBT) is betting big on AI ahead of the coming civic polls in Maharashtra.

The opposition party is likely to use this new-age technology to reach out to a wider section of people, specially youngsters who are tech-savvy.

Elections to various civic bodies, including the cash-rich Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, are likely to be held later this year.

Banking on AI by the Uddhav Thackeray-led party comes at a time when he is facing challenges in his political career, in view of the split in the Shiv Sena and collapse of his Maha Vikas Aghadi government in 2022 as well as poor show in the state polls last year.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Anil Desai told PTI that he uses AI as much as possible, specially for data analysis.

On Friday, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP and party mouthpiece's executive editor Sanjay Raut unveiled "Tejasvi AI", claimed to be the first Artificial Intelligence anchor in Marathi media.

The AI anchor will read out news on Saamana's YouTube channel, he said.

Dressed in a black suit, AI anchor appears to be a man in his late twenties or early thirties with a sharp nose and jawline. —*PTI*

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Anil Desai told PTI that he uses AI as much as possible, specially for data analysis
PHOTO: PTI

EC revises voters' list for bypolls after 20 years

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

In a significant move, the Election Commission (EC) has revised the voters' list for five constituencies for the forthcoming assembly bypolls, marking the first such revision in nearly two decades. The last special summary revision for a bypoll occurred in Tamil Nadu in 2006.

Under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, electoral rolls are required to be updated before every election and bypoll, unless directed otherwise by the EC. Officials clarified that the validity of the current electoral roll will remain intact until the completion of this special revision.

The EC has indicated that the decision to revise electoral rolls is at its discretion, based on necessity. Bypolls will take place on 19th June in four states, with counting scheduled for 23 June. Gujarat will host two bypolls, while Kerala, West Bengal, and Punjab will each see one. – *PTI*

PHOTO: X

Assam girl crowned 'Britian's Got Talent's' runner-up

GUWAHATI, 1 JUNE

Binita Chetry, 9, from Assam on Sunday was adjudged the second runner-up on the popular reality show 'Britain's Got Talent', marking a significant journey from her village in Karbi Anglong to an international stage. Assam's Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma extended his congratulations on social media, praising Binita's stunning performances which captivated audiences both in India and the UK. The competition was won by magician Harry Moulding, with LED dance group 'The Blackouts' in second place. In a heartfelt video, Binita thanked her supporters from various countries. She expressed her desire to meet Sarma personally and acknowledged financial assistance from local officials. Her intricate dance routines received widespread acclaim throughout the competition. *—PTI*

5 killed in accident in Himachal Pradesh

MANDI, 1 JUNE

A pickup vehicle, travelling from Ludhiana in Punjab to IIT Kamand in Mandi in Himachal Pradesh, crashed into the railings of a bridge, resulting in the deaths of five workers and seriously injuring another on Sunday. The driver reportedly lost control of the vehicle, leading to the devastating collision. Among the deceased are Sukhvinder, Umesh, and Sagar, all from various regions of Punjab, while two others are yet to be identified.The driver has been admitted to a local hospital for treatment.The bodies have been sent for autopsy. The investigation into the accident were underway as authorities sought to determine the cause behind the driver's loss of control. *—PTI*

Bird Flu confirmed in UP; culling operations begin

GORAKHPUR, 1 JUNE

Bird flu has been confirmed in five localities of Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, leading to local authorities shutting down all live bird markets for 21 days and initiating culling operations in affected areas. The National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases in Bhopal verified the presence of avian influenza strains, H5N1 and H9N2 in poultry samples. Infected localities include the Shaheed Ashfaqullah Khan Zoological Park. Rapid response teams were moblized and a control established at the Sadar Veterinary Hospital. Culling operations were underway within a one-kilometre radius of the outbreak zones, with thorough disinfection efforts in progress. Ongoing surveillance has resulted in 1,328 samples being tested. *—PTI*

Khanna assumes charge of Southern Air Command

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Air Marshal Manish Khanna has taken charge as the air officer commanding-in-ahief of the Southern Air Command (SAC) from 1 June in Thiruvananthapuram. A distinguished officer with over 4,000 flying hours on various fighter and trainer aircraft, Khanna was commissioned into the Indian Air Force's fighter stream on 6 December 1986. He has been awarded the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal and the Vayu Sena Medal. Khanna possesses extensive operational and training experience, including an international assignment as chief flying instructor with the Botswana defence forces. His notable positions include commanding a fighter squadron and serving as senior sir staff officer at South Western Command. *—PTI*

3,802 HIT AS RAIN BATTERS MANIPUR

1,500 tourists stranded as landslides destroys arterial road linking Gangtok to North Sikkim

IMPHAL, 1 JUNE

In Manipur, at least 3,802 people have been affected and 883 houses damaged in the last 48 hours due to heavy rain-induced floods and landslides. The Imphal East district has been the worst hit, with multiple localities inundated after the Imphal river overflowed and breached its embankments.

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, along with Chief Secretary PK Singh, visited submerged areas including Kangla Nongpok Thong, Lairikyengbam Leikai, and Singjamei Bridge to assess the damage. The Indian Army and Assam Rifles rescued nearly 800 people, providing essential supplies and relocating them to safer areas.

Waterlogging was reported at key government facilities, including the All India Radio Imphal complex and the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences. Officials reported 12 landslides across the state, and two people have been injured. Additionally, 64 animals have perished.

The Iril river in Imphal East crossed the danger mark on Sunday, with efforts underway to strengthen embankments. Although water levels began receding in parts of Checkon and Wangkhei, areas like Khurai and Heingang remain underwater.

Meanwhile, in North Sikkim, more than 1,500 tourists are stranded after landslides destroyed sections of the arterial road linking the region to Gangtok. One person has reportedly died and several others have been injured. In one alarming incident, eight people went missing after the vehicle they were travelling in plunged into the overflowing Teesta river in Mangan district.

Transport services across the region have been severely disrupted. Flights, buses, and trains have been cancelled or delayed, and many rural communities remain cut off as roads are washed away or blocked by landslides.

Emergency relief and rescue efforts are being carried out on a war footing by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Forces (SDRF), local police, fire departments, and civil volunteers.

Experts note that the scale of displacement and destruction seen over the past 72 hours highlights gaps in early warning systems and flood preparedness. Despite setting up relief camps in advance, many states have struggled to meet the immediate needs of evacuees.

The overflowing Brahmaputra River, which flows through Assam into Bangladesh, has breached its banks, submerging vast areas and isolating many communities. Its tributaries, too, are in spate, worsening the flood situation across the region. Governments have appealed to the public to remain indoors *—PTI*

Rescue personnel assist locals in moving to a safer place through a rescue boat at a flood-affected area amid rainfall in Agartala, Tripura, Sunday

PHOTO: PTI

Onion growers seek Rs 1L for crop damage

MUMBAI, 1 JUNE

Onion growers' association, Maharashtra Rajya Kanda Utpadak Sanghatna has demanded a compensation of Rs 1 lakh per acre for farmers, who lost their crop due to severe rainfall in Maharashtra. In a letter written to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, they demanded "transparent" onion procurement by the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India. The also demanded a subsidy of Rs 2,000 per quintal for farmers, who sold their crops at a lower price. *—PTI*

Scolding does not equate provocation to take own life: SC

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

The Supreme Court has discharged a man accused of driving a student to suicide by scolding him.

The accused, in charge of a school and a hostel, had scolded the deceased following a complaint by another student. The student then hanged himself in a room.

A bench of Justices Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Prashant Kumar Mishra stated that no normal person could not imagine that a scolding would result in such a tragedy.

The top court set aside an order of the Madras High Court, which had refused to discharge the teacher for the offence of abetment to suicide under Section 306 of the Indian Penal Code.

Such scolding was the least to ensure that the complaint made against the deceased by another student was taken note of and remedial measures were effected.

"In the considered opinion of this court, under such admitted factual position, no mens rea (knowledge of wrongdoing) can be attributed to the appellant, much less, with regard to abatement of suicide committed by the deceased," the bench said.

The man had submitted that his response was justified and merely a chiding as a guardian to ensure that the deceased did not repeat the offence, and to maintain peace and tranquillity in the hostel.

He had submitted that there was nothing personal between him and the deceased *—PTI*

Bihar rape victim, left waiting for hrs, dies

PATNA, 1 JUNE

A critically injured girl, who was left waiting in an ambulance for several hours after being raped in Bihar's Muzaffarpur recently, died at the Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH) on Sunday.

The minor was raped on 26 May in her village in Muzaffarpur.

The victim's family had reportedly reached PMCH at 11 am on 31 May, but she was admitted there after 3pm due to the unavailability of a hospital bed, state Congress president Rajesh Ram alleged.

A purported video of the incident had gone viral o, though its authenticity could not be verified.

The victim's throat and chest were brutally slashed by the accused. Her vocal chords were damaged. The accused was arrested.

Ram alleged that the victim had died as the law and order and the health system in the state had collapsed. The NDA government in the state and the PMCH administration are solely responsible for the death of the girl.

Bihar Health Minister Mangal Pandey was unavailable for comment. The accused reportedly lured the minor on the pretext of offering chocolate near her aunt's house and took her to a maize field and raped her. *—PTI*

UP Dalit family attacked for hosting wedding in hall

BALLIA, 1 JUNE

A Dalit family in Rasra, Uttar Pradesh, was reportedly assaulted by a group of men for holding a wedding ceremony at the Swayamvar Marriage Hall in Rasra in Uttar Pradesh on 30 May. According to police, two individuals suffered serious injuries in the attack.

The incident unfolded around 10.30pm when approximately 20 assailants, wielding sticks and rods, stormed the venue. The attackers allegedly questioned the family's right to host a wedding in a hall, with statements such as, "Being from a Dalit community, how can you hold a wedding in a hall?" recorded in the FIR filed by Raghvendra Gautam, a relative of the victims.

The complaint named four individuals—Aman Sahni, Deepak Sahni, Rahul, and Akhilesh—as leaders of the attack, along with about 15 to 20 unidentified accomplices from the Mallah Toli locality. The accused are also alleged to have made caste-based slurs before launching the assault.

Police have registered a case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Investigation is ongoing, but no arrests have been made as of yet, according to Rasra Police Station in-charge, Vipin Singh. *—PTI*

Robbers using dating apps to loot victims arrested

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Three men suspected of using online dating platforms to lure and rob victims were apprehended following a shootout with police in the Yamuna Khadar area of northeast Delhi early on Sunday. The incident unfolded around 2:25am when a police patrol received intelligence about individuals linked to recent robberies allegedly planning another crime near New Usmannagar. Upon arrival, officers noticed three men behaving suspiciously. When approached, the group attempted to flee into nearby woods and opened fire. *Bal*

THOUSANDS NOW HOMELESS

Bulldozers rolled into Madrasi Camp in Jangpura on Sunday, demolishing dozens of homes following court-ordered eviction notices. The operation, carried out under heavy security deployment, left residents in tears as their shelters were reduced to rubble

PHOTO: PTI

Residents watch as decades-old homes razed in Delhi's Madrasi Camp

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Residents of Madrasi Camp in south Delhi's Jungpura looked on in despair as bulldozers rolled into their locality, tearing down homes many had lived in for decades.

"Where will we live now?" — the sentiment was writ large on most faces as civic authorities carried out the demolition drive at the slum clusters near Barapullah bridge following a Delhi High Court order.

"I have been living here for the past 60 years now. My children were born here, everything happened here. We are sitting on the road. We do not know where to go," said Janki, an elderly woman, sitting on the side of the road.

Residents and activists have urged the government to ensure proper rehabilitation before proceeding with further evictions.

Around 370 working class families lived in the jhuggi cluster which has been in existence for around 60 years. They were served eviction notices last month and those eligible would be relocated to government flats in Narela.

On 12 April, officials declared a list of families that were eligible for the government-allotted flats. Only 189 families were found eligible for the flats.

A notice issued by authorities to the residents on May 30 stated that trucks would be stationed at Barapullah Bridge from 11pm on Friday till 1 June to assist in transporting their belongings to the allotted flats.

Sumidhi, another resident, echoed the same concern. "I have been living here for 30 years now. Several generations have lived here. My daughter is also pregnant now. We were told we would be given homes."

"There are so many families living here and earning a livelihood, but only 100-150 have been allotted (government flats). Where will we go now? We have not been allotted a house," she said

Shanti, another resident of the jhuggi cluster, said their house was torn down without warning. "They demolished our house, we couldn't even take out all our belongings. We have lost many household items that we bought with our hard-earned money, she said.

Raju, who has been living in the camp for 45 years, said that even those who were allotted homes in Narela are struggling.

"Around 189 families were given houses, but the condition of those houses is terrible. There is no electricity, no water supply, and even the doors and windows are broken," he said.

South East Delhi District Magistrate Anil Banka said the demolition drive was taken following high court orders.

He added that 370 houses were demolished in the drive, and out of them, 189 families were found eligible for relocation to Narela. AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj posted on X saying the demolition drive at the Madrasi Camp appeared to go against the Delhi Chief Minister's assurance that no slum would be removed. *—PTI*

PROTEST AGAINST BIBI

People take part in a protest demanding the end of the war and immediate release of hostages held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, in Tel Aviv
PHOTO: PTI

People in Assam are tracing their roots amid deportations

The disappearance of a 58-year-old widow, Shona Banu, after being summoned by police in Assam's Barpeta district has triggered alarm among her family and renewed concerns over the alleged forced deportation of individuals declared "foreigners" by the state's Foreigners' Tribunals.

Banu, who was summoned to the local police station on 24 May with citizenship documents, has not been seen since. Her daughters claim to have no information about her whereabouts and fear she may have been deported to Bangladesh. Their uncle, Ashraf Ali, who accompanied Banu to the police station, told PTI, "She was kept inside the station the whole day, and we were not allowed in. Since then, we've heard nothing."

Ali said Banu had been declared a 'foreigner' by the tribunal in 2017 and had spent more than three years in a detention centre before being released in 2020 following a Supreme Court directive. "She had been complying with weekly reporting requirements. When the call came, we thought it was routine," he said. Ali added that videos have surfaced online, reportedly from Bangladesh, and "we spotted her in one of them."

"We are very worried. Her daughters are in tears. We appeal to the authorities to clarify her whereabouts and bring her back if she has been sent to Bangladesh," said Ali. He claimed her case remains pending in the Supreme Court.

A similar case has emerged in Darrang district, where 42-year-old Manikjan Begum was summoned to Dhula police station on 23 May, and the following day to the Superintendent of Police's office in Mangaldoi. Her family says they were barred from entering the premises, and she has since disappeared.

Her son, 22-year-old Barek Ali, said, "We have no news of her. We've seen a video showing her in Bangladesh with our eight-month-old sister." Begum, declared a foreigner in 2018, had completed two years in Goalpara detention centre and was released under Supreme Court directions. The family is now preparing to file a petition in Gauhati High Court.

The Gauhati High Court directed the ssam government to provide information on the whereabouts of two brothersdeclared foreigners by the tribunal and detained by Nagarbera police on 25 May ***PHOTO: PTI***

The disappearances appear to be part of a broader crackdown on declared foreign nationals (DFNs) that began on 23 May. Two individuals were detained in Jaleswar, Goalpara; one was released after document verification, while Abdul Hamid Sheikh, declared a foreigner in 2018 but never previously detained, was sent to a detention centre.

"Sheikh had not been detained before. Now he has been taken in. We are preparing to file a petition in the high court," said his lawyer Hamidul Islam.

These developments come amid mounting legal challenges. The Gauhati High Court on Thursday directed the Assam government to provide information on the whereabouts of two brothers, Abu Bakkar Siddik and Akbar Ali, declared foreigners by the tribunal and detained by Nagarbera police on 25 May. Their family claims to have received no information despite visiting detention centres.

Jumuruddin, the duo's elder brother, said, "We are five brothers. Three are Indians, two are foreigners. How can that be? We just want to know where they are." Their nephew has filed a habeas corpus petition in court.

Advocate Aman Wadud, representing the family, alleged, "The state is forcefully pushing declared foreigners to Bangladesh, without Supreme Court authorisation. There's no order permitting this kind of arbitrary deportation."

A separate plea filed in the Supreme Court earlier highlighted what it described as a "sweeping and indiscriminate drive" by Assam to detain and deport individuals suspected to be foreigners, often without nationality verification or exhausting legal remedies.

The plea referenced a Supreme Court order from 4 February, which directed Assam to deport 63 foreign nationals within two weeks—but only where nationality had been confirmed. The petitioners claim the Assam government, in an affidavit, had earlier admitted that deportation could not proceed without nationality verification and travel permits from the destination country.

Wadud said, "The state government is misinterpreting the apex court's order and going back on its own affidavit." Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma defended the crackdown, stating on Friday that the identification and removal of foreigners would be accelerated. "We are taking action only against those who have not appealed in the higher judiciary. Those with pending appeals in the Supreme Court or high court are not being acted upon," Sarma said.

However, critics and families of the missing argue that the reality on the ground is far more chaotic and lacks transparency. With growing reports of missing persons and suspected cross-border deportations, legal and human rights experts are calling for greater oversight and adherence to due process.

As questions mount, the families of the missing—many of whom include young children—continue to plead for clarity and justice. *—PTI*

SALAR ساڈ

Night owls at higher risk of age-related cognitive decline

A night owl — or an evening person with a late sleep-wake cycle — could be at a higher risk of cognitive decline with age compared to an early bird or a morning person, a study has found.

Chronotype refers to one's sleep-wake type or times during the day when one naturally tends to be awake and asleep. A 'night owl' chronotype is said to have a later sleep-wake cycle, compared to an 'early bird' or a 'lark'.

"Are you an early bird or a night owl? It's hard to adjust what your biological clock — your so-called chronotype — is, but you can adjust your life to it as best you can," study author Ana Wenzler, from the University Medical Center Groningen, the Netherlands, said.

Analysing the performance of about 23,800 participants on a cognitive test over a period of 10 years, the study found that evening people decline cognitively faster than morning people. The findings have been published in The Journal of Prevention of Alzheimer's Disease.

"Unhealthy behaviour such as smoking, drinking and unhealthy eating happens more often in the evening," Wenzler said.

"In our study, we also saw this: evening people smoke and drink more often and exercise less. Twenty-five per cent of the risk of cognitive decline can be explained from our research by smoking and poor sleep," she said.

A greater decline was seen in higher-educated people — a delay of an hour in the sleep-wake cycle corresponded to a decline of 0.8 in cognition per decade.

Wenzler said the decline might be related to their disturbed sleep rhythm.

"They are often people who have to go back to work early in the morning and are therefore more likely to sleep too short, giving their brains too little rest," she said.

The author explained that people's biological clock can change with age.

"Children are morning people. That changes when you reach puberty, when you become an evening person. Around your 20s, that gradually shifts back towards morning people for most people.

By the age of 40, most people are morning people again," Wenzler said.

However, this is certainly not the case for everyone, which is probably why evening people deviate from the norm, according to Wenzler, who recommended working against one's body "as little as possible".

"'You can try to go to sleep earlier, but if your body is not yet producing melatonin (sleep hormone), it will not work: your body simply does not want to sleep yet," she said.

Wenzler added, "If (not working against body) is not possible, your brain does not get enough rest, and you are more likely to adopt bad habits.

It would be nice if more consideration was given to evening people who now have to work early: for example, by giving them the option of starting later." *—PTI*

A greater decline was seen in higher-educated people — a delay of an hour in the sleep-wake cycle corresponded to a decline of 0.8 in cognition per decade ***PHOTO: PTI***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

AI is now helping researchers sniff out disinformation campaigns

Cold, hard facts rarely determine public belief. It is stories — compelling, emotional, and familiar —that shape how people view the world. Whether it's a heartfelt anecdote, a personal testimony, or a meme echoing cultural values, stories stick with us and move us. This psychological truth is what makes storytelling a potent tool, and a dangerous one when misused.

For decades, foreign adversaries have exploited narrative tactics to manipulate public opinion in the United States. In the age of social media, these efforts have become more complex and amplified. The issue gained significant attention after evidence surfaced that Russian operatives used Facebook to influence the 2016 US elections.

Now, artificial intelligence (AI) is both worsening and combating the problem. While AI can help create and spread disinformation more effectively, it is also emerging as a powerful tool to detect and neutralise these threats.

At the Cognition, Narrative and Culture Lab at Florida International University, we are developing AI tools specifically trained to detect disinformation campaigns using narrative persuasion. Unlike traditional language analysis, our AI models delve deeper, decoding story structure, tracking personas and timelines, and identifying culturally specific references.

While AI can help create and spread disinformation more effectively, it is also emerging as a powerful tool to detect and neutralise these threats ***PHOTO: PIXABAY***

Misinformation vs disinformation

Understanding the distinction between misinformation and disinformation is crucial. Misinformation is incorrect or misleading information shared without malicious intent. Disinformation, on the other hand, is deliberately false information crafted to deceive and manipulate.

In July 2024, the US Department of Justice disrupted a Kremlin-backed operation involving nearly a thousand fake social media accounts pushing disinformation. This wasn't a one-off event but part of a larger, AI-powered campaign. A particularly vivid example occurred in October 2024 when a video, purportedly showing a Pennsylvania election worker destroying Trump ballots, went viral on X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook. The FBI later linked the video to a Russian influence operation, but not before it had amassed millions of views and stoked political tension.

Narratives are powerful because they connect with people emotionally. They help us interpret complex events, remember key ideas, and form opinions. A single story, such as the viral tale of a sea turtle harmed by a plastic straw, can do more to shift public perception than reams of data.

This emotional potency is precisely what makes narratives a dangerous weapon in the hands of bad actors.

Analysing narratives: Beyond words

Disinformation campaigns often rely not just on what is said, but on who is saying it and how. AI systems must consider the constructed identities behind these stories. Usernames, for instance, can be revealing. A handle like @JamesBurnsNYT suggests journalistic credibility, while @JimB_NYC is more casual. Both may imply a male user from New York, but only one carries institutional weight.

Our research, presented at the 2024 International Conference on Web and Social Media, demonstrates how AI can infer demographic cues — name, gender, sentiment, and even personality — based on usernames. Disinformation networks often mimic real people or respected institutions to build trust and lend credibility to their messages.

This interpretive layer, examining narrative context, identity construction, and emotional intent, helps AI assess the authenticity of a source, not just the content itself.

Mapping time and culture

Narratives often unfold non-linearly. A social media thread might begin with a shocking event, flash back to prior moments, or skip vital details. Humans can follow fragmented storytelling with ease, but for AI, reconstructing accurate timelines is a major challenge.

Our lab is developing systems to extract event timelines from narratives, determining the sequence of events and their interconnections, even when the narrative is non-linear. This is crucial for understanding disinformation that seeks to distort causality or hide key facts.

Cultural literacy is another essential dimension. Symbols, colours, and emotional cues carry different meanings across cultures. A woman in a white dress may evoke joy in a Western setting, but in parts of Asia, where white symbolises mourning, the same image could feel sombre or inappropriate. Training AI on diverse cultural narratives enhances its ability to accurately interpret and identify manipulative content. This cultural sensitivity is vital, as foreign actors often tailor disinformation to resonate deeply within specific communities.

Who benefits from narrative-aware AI?

Narrative-aware AI can benefit a wide range of stakeholders.

- Intelligence agencies could identify orchestrated influence campaigns by mapping the spread and evolution of narrative arcs across social platforms.
- Crisis-response teams could detect dangerous falsehoods—such as fake disaster alerts—and act before panic spreads.
- Social media companies could use these tools to flag high-risk content for human moderation, ensuring harmful posts are reviewed without over-censoring legitimate discourse.
- Academics and educators could study how stories evolve in online ecosystems, enhancing understanding of digital communication and influence.
- Everyday users could receive alerts when content they see may be disinformation, allowing them to approach suspicious narratives with informed scepticism.

As AI continues to play a larger role in monitoring online content, its ability to comprehend the nuances of storytelling, cultural context, emotional tone, identity construction, and narrative sequencing, is becoming increasingly vital.

At Florida International University, we are building systems designed to uncover hidden patterns, decode symbols, and trace narrative arcs. These tools will help protect democratic discourse from manipulation and ensure that stories used to inform the public are not secretly designed to deceive them *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Three patients killed in Germany hospital fire

HAMBURG, 1 JUNE

A devastating fire at the Marienkrankenhaus hospital in Hamburg has resulted in the deaths of three patients and left many others injured. The incident, which occurred shortly after midnight, began in a geriatric ward room on the ground floor and rapidly spread to the facade of the upper floor. Authorities reported that smoke engulfed the building's four storeys. Emergency services responded promptly, extinguishing the fire within approximately 20 minutes. In total, more than 50 individuals were reported injured, with two in critical condition, 16 sustaining serious injuries, and 36 experiencing minor ailments. A section of the hospital had to be evacuated as injured patients received treatment either on-site or at nearby facilities. *—PTI*

Voting commences for Presidential election in Poland

WARSAW, 1 JUNE

Poland commenced voting on Sunday in a pivotal presidential runoff that could significantly influence the nation's political direction and its ties with the European Union. The contest features Warsaw Mayor Rafal Trzaskowski, a liberal pro-EU candidate, against Karol Nawrocki, a conservative historian supported by the right-wing Law and Justice party. With outgoing President Andrzej Duda concluding his second term, the new President will hold the power to veto laws, impacting Prime Minister Donald Tusk's centrist agenda. Both candidates have starkly different visions, with Trzaskowski advocating for judicial independence and closer EU ties, while Nawrocki champions traditional Polish values and is sceptical of EU influence. Results come today. *—PTI*

Ecuador says sorry to workers treated like slaves

QUITO, 1 JUNE

Ecuador's government issued a public apology on Saturday to a group of plantation workers who were subjected to slave-like conditions in accordance to a ruling issued last year by the country's Constitutional Court. In an event held near the presidential palace in Quito, various members of Ecuador's Cabinet recognised that more than 300 workers of a Japanese-owned abaca plantation were forced to live in conditions of "modern slavery" between 1963 and 2019 with Labor Minister Ivone Nuñez pledging that Ecuador will strive to "build a state that guarantees the human rights of workers." Former employees of the company, Furukawa, attended the ceremony. *—PTI*

Nepal's former HM arrested amid pro-monarchy rally

KATHMANDU, 1 JUNE

Nepal's former home minister Kamal Thapa and about half a dozen others were arrested after they tried to enter a restricted area during a pro-monarchy protest in Kathmandu on Sunday, police said. To reinstate monarchy and establish Nepal as a Hindu state, the pro-monarchy groups, including the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) and RPP Nepal, protested at Narayan Chaur on the fourth day of the agitation. Agitators tried to break the security cordon and move towards Baluwatar, the Prime Minister's official residence, and clashed with the police, officials said. Police said Thapa and others were arrested for violating the restricted zone around the Narayanhiti Palace Museum area. About 1,200 pro-monarchy supporters, participated in the protest, police said. *—PTI*

An Israeli airstrike on Gaza city on Sunday. Israel's military campaign has killed over 54,000 people, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry *PHOTO: PTI*

Israel shoots dead 31 Palestinians en route to aid hub

US rejects Hamas' amendments to ceasefire deal

RAFAH/TEL AVIV 1 JUNE

- Thousands headed toward the distribution site before dawn. As they moved toward the site, Israeli forces opened fire on them from around 1km away

At least 31 people were killed and scores were wounded on Sunday as they were on their way to receive food in the Gaza Strip, according to health officials and multiple witnesses. The witnesses said Israeli forces fired on crowds around a kilometre away from an aid site run by an Israeli and US-backed foundation.

The Gaza Health Ministry said 31, including two women, were killed and 170 others were wounded.

Thousands headed toward the distribution site before dawn. As they moved toward the site, Israeli forces ordered them to disperse and come back later, witnesses said. When the crowds reached the Flag Roundabout, around 1 kilometer away Israeli forces opened fire, witnesses said.

"There was fire from all directions, from naval warships, from tanks and drones," said Amr Abu Teiba, a civilian. People used carts to ferry the dead and wounded to the field hospital.

Hours before, officials at a nearby field hospital run by the Red Cross said that at least 21 people were killed and another 175 were wounded.

The Army however released a brief statement saying it was "currently unaware of injuries caused by (Israeli military) fire within the Humanitarian Aid distribution site." The foundation similarly said that it delivered aid "without incident" early on Sunday and has denied previous accounts of gunfire around its sites.

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation 's distribution of aid has been marred by chaos. Before Sunday, at least six people had been killed and more than 50 wounded according to local health officials.

Meanwhile, US envoy Steve Witkoff called the Hamas proposed amendments to the latest US ceasefire proposal "totally unacceptable".

The Hamas statement said they aimed for a permanent ceasefire, a comprehensive Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a guaranteed flow of aid.

It said 10 living hostages and the bodies of 18 others would be released "in exchange for an agreed-upon number of Palestinian prisoners."

Witkoff, on social media, instead described a 60-day ceasefire deal that would free half the living hostages in Gaza and return half of those who have died.

He urged Hamas to accept the framework proposal as the basis for talks that he said could begin next week. *—PTI*

Bangladesh charges Sheikh Hasina with mass murder

DHAKA, 1 JUNE

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal on Sunday indicted former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and two others on several charges, including mass murder, for their alleged role in the violent crackdown on student-led protests last year.

Sunday's proceedings marked the start of Hasina's trial in absentia nearly 10 months after the ouster of her government following the protests. The proceedings of the tribunal were broadcast live on television for the first time in Bangladesh's history.

"We do hereby take into cognizance the charges," the three-judge ICT bench said after a prosecution team formally accused them of attempting to tame the protests using brutal force.

The tribunal simultaneously issued a fresh arrest warrant against Hasina and then home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

The third accused, the then inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, is in custody to stand trial in person.

The prosecution charged Hasina with exercising absolute authority to ruthlessly suppress the uprising. The two others were accused of provocation, complicity, abatement, instigation and facilitation.

Sheikh Hasina *PHOTO: ANI*

All three were accused of superior command responsibility for the crimes.

If convicted, Hasina and the co-accused could face the death penalty.

The proceedings were scheduled to begin at 9.30am but were delayed as unidentified people hurled three crude bombs at the gate of the tribunal hours before the beginning of the trial. *—PTI*

B'desh SC restores Jamaat-e-Islami's party registration

Bangladesh's Supreme Court on Sunday ordered the Election Commission to restore the rightwing Jamaat-e-Islami's party registration, nearly eight months after the interim government lifted a ban on it, clearing the way for its participation in future elections. The EC scrapped the registration of Jamaat, which was opposed to Bangladesh's 1971 independence from Pakistan, in December 2018 in line with a High Court ruling. Jaamaat and several other parties had backed Students against Discrimination (SAD), which led the protest ousting Hasina.

Has a Cold War mentality: China fumes at Hegseth's remarks

BEIJING, 1 JUNE

China on Sunday denounced US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth for calling the Asian country a threat, accusing him of touting a Cold War mentality as tensions between Washington and Beijing further escalate.

The Foreign Ministry said Hegseth had vilified Beijing with defamatory allegations at the Shangri-La Dialogue, a global security conference in Singapore, where he said Washington will bolster overseas to counter a rapidly developing threats by Beijing, particularly in its aggressive stance toward Taiwan.

"Hegseth deliberately ignored the call for peace and development by countries in the region, and instead touted the Cold War mentality for bloc confrontation," it said.

"No country in the world deserves to be called a hegemonic power other than the US itself," it said.

China stressed that the Taiwan question is entirely China's internal affair, saying the US must "never play with fire". It also alleged Washington had deployed offensive weaponry in the South China Sea, was "stoking flames and creating tensions in the Asia-Pacific" and "turning the region into a powder keg."

Meanwhile, China and North Korea's support for Russia in its war against Ukraine has exposed how lines between regions have blurred, and the need for a global approach toward defence, top security officials said at the conference on Sunday.

Lithuanian Defence Minister Dovile Šakaliene said that if Ukraine were to fall, it would have a ripple effect in Asia, especially for smaller nations. *—PTI*

IRAN'S VOWS COOPERATION AMID RISING URANIUM STOCKPILES

DUBAI, 1 JUNE

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi engaged in telephone discussions with Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), following a report that revealed Iran's escalation of its uranium stockpile enriched to near weapons-grade levels.

Abbas Araghchi and Rafael Mariano Grossi *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

In a statement on Telegram, Araghchi underscored Iran's commitment to "continuous cooperation," despite the IAEA's report expressing serious concerns about Iran being the only non-nuclear weapon state producing such material. The agency highlighted that Iran's cooperation has been deemed "less than satisfactory" regarding uranium traces found at undeclared sites.

Araghchi urged Grossi to prevent certain parties from using the IAEA for political purposes against Iran. As tensions mount, European nations may consider further actions against Iran based on the IAEA's findings.

Iran's deputy foreign minister, Kazem Gharibabadi, countered the IAEA's assertions, asserting that Iran's nuclear activities remain transparent and under monitoring. He insisted that the Islamic Republic does not seek nuclear weapons.

As of 17 May, Iran reportedly holds 408.6 kilograms of uranium enriched to 60 per cent, a nearly 50 per cent increase since February. This comes as Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi mediates ongoing US-Iran talks aimed at limiting Iran's nuclear weapons in exchange for sanctions relief. *—PTI*

12 Ukraine soldiers killed in Russian drone strikes

MOSCOW/KYIV, 1 JUNE

At least 12 Ukrainian service members were killed and more than 60 injured in a Russian missile strike on the location of a Ukrainian army training unit on Sunday, the Ukrainian Ground Forces said.

The strike occurred at 12.50pm, the statement said, emphasising that no formations or mass gatherings of personnel were being held at the time.

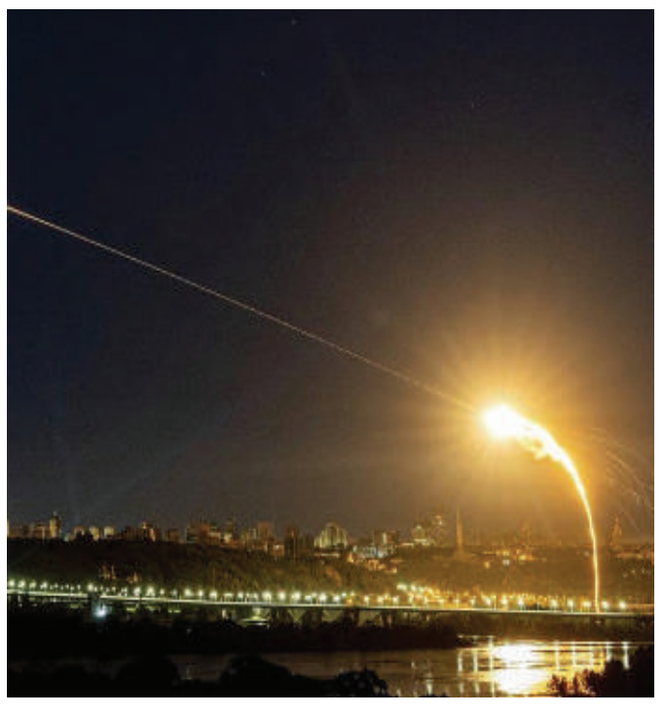
The training unit is located to the rear of the 1,000km active front line, where Russian reconnaissance and strike drones are able to strike.

Ukraine's forces suffer from manpower shortages and take extra precautions to avoid mass gatherings as the skies across the front line are saturated with Russian drones.

Meanwhile, Russia launched the biggest number of drones on Ukraine since the full-scale invasion three years ago, Ukraine's Air Force said on Sunday.

472 drones and seven missiles were launched over Ukraine, said Yuriy Ignat, Head of Communications for the Ukrainian Air Force.

Russia's Ministry of Defence also said that it had taken control of the village of Oleksiivka in Ukraine's northern Sumy region.



Russia launched the most number of drones on Ukraine since the start of the war *PHOTO: PTI*

Simultaneously, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he will send delegation to Istanbul for a new round of direct peace talks with Russia today. *—PTI*

Several dead as 2 bridges collapse, train derails in Russia

MOSCOW, 1 JUNE

Explosions caused the collapse of two bridges in western Russia, leading to the derailment of two trains and the deaths of at least seven people. The first incident occurred Saturday in the Bryansk region, bordering Ukraine, when a bridge collapsed, crushing a passenger train.

Hours later, a second train derailed in the nearby Kursk region when the bridge beneath it also collapsed. The freight train was thrown off its rails, igniting a fire, but fortunately, no casualties were reported. At least 70 were injured in the two incidents.

Local officials said they were a result of "illegal interference in transport operations."

Ukraine's military intelligence (GUR) claimed that a Russian military freight train carrying supplies to Crimea was destroyed, but did not connect this to the bridge incidents. *—PTI*

THE RIFT CONTINUES

Trump withdraws NASA nomination for Musk's aide

WASHINGTON, 1 JUNE

US President Donald Trump announced late Saturday that he is withdrawing the nomination of tech billionaire Jared Isaacman to lead NASA saying he reached the decision after a "thorough review" of Isaacman's "prior associations." Isaacman is a close associate of Elon Musk.

"After a thorough review of prior associations, I am hereby withdrawing the nomination of Jared Isaacman to head NASA," Trump wrote on his social media site. "I will soon announce a new Nominee who will be Mission aligned and put America First in Space."

It was unclear what Trump meant, and the White House did not respond to questions.

Trump announced in December during the presidential transition that he had chosen Isaacman to be the space agency's next administrator. Isaacman, 42, has been a close collaborator with Musk ever since buying his first chartered flight on Musk's SpaceX company in 2021.

He is the CEO and founder of Shift4, a credit card processing company. He also bought a series of spaceflights from SpaceX and conducted the first private spacewalk. SpaceX has extensive contracts with NASA.

The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee approved Isaacman's nomination in late April, and a vote by the full Senate was expected soon.

Musk appeared to lament Trump's decision after the news broke earlier Saturday, posting on his X that "It is rare to find someone so competent and good-hearted."

SpaceX is owned by Musk, a Trump campaign contributor who announced this week that he is leaving the government after several months at the helm of the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE. *—PTI*

Jared Isaacman *PHOTO: X*

FDA APPROVES MODERNA'S NEW LOWER-DOSE COVID-19 VACCINE

The US approved a new Covid-19 vaccine made by Moderna but with limits on who can use it — not a replacement for existing shots, but a second option. The new vaccine, mNexspike, is a step toward next-generation coronavirus vaccines, it said. It's made in a way that allows for a lower dose — a fifth of the dose of its current Covid-19 vaccine, Spikevax — by refining its immune target. The FDA approved the new vaccine for use in all adults 65 and older, and for people aged 12 to 64 who have a health condition that their increased their risk from Covid.

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Goyal commences 5-day official visit to France, Italy

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday commenced his three-day official visit to France, which is part of his ongoing visit to France and Italy from 1 to 5 June. "The visit reflects India's continued commitment to deepening strategic and economic ties with key European partners and advancing a shared vision for resilient and inclusive global growth," said the commerce ministry in a statement. During his engagements in France, Goyal is scheduled to hold bilateral meetings with French Ministers, including Eric Lombard, Minister of Economy, and Laurent Saint-Martin, French Trade Minister. The discussions will focus on strengthening the Indo-French economic partnership and exploring new avenues for enhancing trade and investment cooperation. *—ANI*

EY India Chairman takes over as CII President

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Ernst & Young (EY) India's Chairman and CEO Rajiv Memani has assumed office as the President of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) for 2025-26, the industry lobby said on Sunday. He takes over from Sanjiv Puri, Chairman & Managing Director of ITC Ltd. Memani is also a member of EY Global Executive Board as the Chair of its Growth Markets Council. R Mukundan, Managing Director & CEO of Tata Chemicals Ltd took over as CII President-Designate for 2025-26. Mukundan joined Tata Administrative Service in 1990, after completion of MBA from FMS, Delhi University. He is a distinguished alumnus of IIT, Roorkee; Fellow of Indian Chemical Society and an alumnus of Harvard Business School. *—PTI*

Emirates' Prez pitches for more access in market

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Emirates Airline President Sir Tim Clark on Sunday said there is a need for more open access in the Indian market as he continued to pitch for increased bilateral rights to operate more flights to India. The leading Gulf carrier, set to complete 40 years of operations in India this October, currently serves nine Indian cities. At a briefing in the national capital, Clark also said the supply chain issues are a "bugbear". Over the years, the airline has been pitching for enhanced bilateral rights between the two countries, which is currently at 65,000 seats per week, to operate at a higher capacity to meet the rising travel demand. According to Clark, "you have to have open access" in the Indian market. *—PTI*

IndiGo places firm order for another 30 A350 planes

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

IndiGo on Sunday announced placing a firm order for another 30 widebody A350 planes with Airbus, taking the total number of such aircraft to 60. In April last year, the airline placed a firm order for 30 A350 aircraft and there was an option to order 70 more such planes. At a briefing in the national capital, IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers said that out of the option for 70 planes, it is now placing a firm order of 30 aircraft. The airline has over 900 planes on order that are to be delivered in the coming years. The country's largest airline is expanding its international network and is set to operate flights to 10 new overseas cities with leased Boeing 787 planes in the current fiscal year ending March 2026. *—PTI*

Mcap of 4 top firms jumps Rs 1 lakh crore

LIC emerges as the biggest gainer in sluggish trend

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

The combined market valuation of four of the top-10 most valued firms jumped Rs 1,01,369.5 crore last week, with Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) emerging as the biggest gainer, in an otherwise sluggish trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark declined 270.07 points or 0.33 per cent.

While HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India and LIC were the gainers in terms of addition to their market valuation, Reliance Industries Ltd, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), ICICI Bank, Infosys, Bajaj Finance and Hindustan Unilever Ltd faced a combined erosion of Rs 34,852.35 crore on the other hand.

The market valuation of LIC surged Rs 59,233.61 crore to Rs 6,03,120.16 crore, the most among the top-10 firms.

State Bank of India added Rs 19,589.54 crore to Rs 7,25,036.13 crore in its valuation.

The mcap of TCS tumbled Rs 17,909.53 crore to Rs 12,53,486.42 crore
PHOTO: ANI

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Bharti Airtel jumped Rs 14,084.2 crore to Rs 10,58,766.92 crore and that of HDFC Bank climbed Rs 8,462.15 crore to Rs 14,89,185.62 crore.

However, the mcap of TCS tumbled Rs 17,909.53 crore to Rs 12,53,486.42 crore.

The valuation of Reliance Industries tanked Rs 7,645.85 crore to Rs 19,22,693.71 crore.

The mcap of Bajaj Finance dropped by Rs 4,061.05 crore to Rs 5,70,146.49 crore and that of ICICI Bank declined by Rs 2,605.81 crore to Rs 10,31,262.20 crore.

- Market capitalisation of Bharti Airtel jumped Rs 14,084.2 crore to Rs 10,58,766.92 crore and that of HDFC Bank climbed Rs 8,462.15 crore to Rs 14,89,185.62 crore.

The valuation of Hindustan Unilever Ltd diminished by Rs 1,973.66 crore to Rs 5,52,001.22 crore and that of Infosys dived Rs 656.45 crore to Rs 6,49,220.46 crore.

Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm followed by HDFC Bank, TCS, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, LIC, Bajaj Finance and Hindustan Unilever Ltd. *—PTI*

THIRD CONSECUTIVE CUT

ATF price cut by 3%, LPG rate down by Rs 24

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

The price of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) has been reduced by 3 per cent — marking the third consecutive monthly cut due to easing international benchmark prices. The new rate in the national capital stands at Rs 83,072.55 per kilolitre, a decrease of Rs 2,414.25 per kilolitre. This follows reductions of 4.4 per cent on 1 May and 6.15 per cent on 1 April, providing relief to commercial airlines, where fuel costs constitute nearly 40 per cent of operational expenses.

Additionally, the price of commercial LPG, commonly used in hotels and restaurants, has dropped by Rs 24 per 19-kg cylinder, now priced at Rs 1,723.50 in Delhi and Rs 1,647.50 in Mumbai.

In a related announcement, the government has also decreased the price of natural gas for producing cooking gas and CNG for vehicles, marking the first reduction in two years. The price from legacy fields, allocated to ONGC, has been lowered from USD 6.75 to USD 6.41 per million British thermal units (mmBtu).

The fall in international oil prices, currently averaging around USD 64 per barrel, is contributing to these domestic price adjustments, bringing relief to consumers and businesses alike, despite petrol and diesel rates remaining unchanged at Rs 94.72 and Rs 87.62 per litre, respectively. *– PTI*

Adani Group unyielding amid scrutiny, says Gautam Adani

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Gautam Adani, chairman of the Adani Group, proclaimed the conglomerate's unwavering resilience amid scrutiny and acquisitions, stating it has emerged "more formidable, unbreakable" than ever. Adani announced plans to invest USD 15-20 billion over the next five years, highlighting the group's robust balance sheet and business growth.

Following a scathing report from US short-seller Hindenburg Research in January 2023, which labelled them as "the largest con in corporate history," the group faced significant market turmoil, with stock prices plummeting by over USD 150 billion.

However, the group recalibrated its strategies, trimmed debt, and refocused on core businesses, resulting in record profits. Adani emphasised that challenges only serve to sharpen their resolve and that none from the group has been charged with violations related to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

In a separate development, Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL) approved raising up to Rs 4,300 crore through various funding methods at a recent board meeting. This could be via the issuance of equity shares or other securities, in one or more tranches.

- In a separate development, Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL) approved raising up to Rs 4,300 crore through various funding methods at a recent board meeting.

Adani highlighted significant milestones across sectors: Adani Power achieved over 100 billion units of power generated, while Adani Green reached over 14 GW of operational renewable energy capacity.

The group's ventures have grown from ports to airports, city gas, and defence manufacturing, with ambitious plans for Dharavi's redevelopment, aiming to transition over 1 million residents into modern housing. *– PTI*

India's forex reserves rise by $7 billion

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

India's foreign exchange reserves have experienced a significant increase, rising by USD 6.992 billion to reach USD 692.721 billion for the week ending 23 May, as per data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This resurgence brings the reserves close to the all-time high of USD 704.89 billion, which was achieved in September 2024.

According to estimates, India's foreign exchange reserves adequately cover about 10 to 12 months of the country's projected imports. The latest figures reveal that India's foreign currency assets (FCA), the primary component of these reserves, stand at USD 586.167 billion. Additionally, the RBI's gold reserves are currently valued at USD 83.582 billion.

Globally, central banks have been increasingly accumulating safe-haven gold, and India has followed suit. Since 2021, the proportion of gold in the RBI's foreign exchange reserves has nearly doubled. In 2023, India added approximately USD 58 billion to its reserves, marking a sharp recovery from a cumulative decline of USD 71 billion in 2022. In 2024, reserves grew by over USD 20 billion.

]The RBI employs various strategies, including the sale of dollars, to manage liquidity and mitigate sharp fluctuations in the value of the Indian Rupee. *– PTI*

RBI likely to deliver 3rd rate cut on Friday

MUMBAI, 1 JUNE

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to go for a third consecutive rate cut of 25 basis points on Friday as inflation continues to remain below the median target of 4 per cent, to push growth amid continued global uncertainty triggered by the US tariff moves.

RBI's rate-setting panel Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will start deliberations on next bi-monthly monetary policy on 4 June and announce the decision on 6 June.

RBI reduced key interest rate (repo) by 25 bps each in February and April bringing it to 6 per cent.

Six-member MPC headed by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra decided to change stance from neutral to accommodative in April policy.

In response to the 50-bps cut in the policy repo rate since February 2025. *– PTI*

Singapore remains India's largest FDI source

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Singapore continued to be India's largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) for the last seven years, as the country received the highest inflows of about USD 15 billion in 2024-25.

The overseas inflow grew 13 per cent to USD 50 billion in the last fiscal.

The total FDI, which includes equity inflows, reinvested earnings and other capital, grew by 14 per cent to USD 81.04 billion during the last financial year. It is the highest in the last three years.

FDI from Singapore in 2024-25 increased to USD 14.94 billion from USD 11.77 billion in 2023-24, according to the latest government data.

Singapore accounted for around 19 per cent of total inflows in 2024–25.

Since 2018-19, Singapore has been the largest source of such investments in India. In 2017-18, India attracted the maximum FDI from Mauritius.

In the last fiscal, the country received USD 8.34 billion in foreign inflows from Mauritius.

During 2024-25, Mauritius was followed by the US, the Netherlands, the UAE, Japan, Cyprus, the UK, Germany, and Cayman Islands.

According to experts, Singapore's position as a global financial hub, combined with strong bilateral ties and its role as a gateway for global private equity and venture capital, makes it a natural conduit for investments into India. *– PTI*

GST sees Rs 2T collection for 2nd straight month

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Gross GST collections rose 16.4 per cent to over Rs 2.01 lakh crore in May, as per government data released on Sunday.

This comes after a record high Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection in April, when the revenues touched an all-time high of Rs 2.37 lakh crore.

In May, gross revenues from domestic transactions rose 13.7 per cent to about Rs 1.50 lakh crore, while GST revenue from imports grew 25.2 per cent to Rs 51,266 crore.

In May, the gross Central GST revenues stood at Rs 35,434 crore, State GST revenues at Rs 43,902 crore and Integrated GST at about Rs 1.09 lakh crore. Revenues from Cess was at Rs 12,879 crore.

In May, 2024, the mop up was Rs 1,72,739 crore.

Meanwhile, total refunds during the month fell 4 per cent to Rs 27,210 crore. *– PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

British Airways eyes expansion in India amid rising demand

NEW DELHI/ MUMBAI, 1 JUNE

British Airways is set to further expand its operations in India, highlighting the country's status as a vital market. In an exclusive interview, CEO Sean Doyle announced plans to increase routes and flight frequencies, especially with upcoming opportunities linked to the India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Currently operating 56 flights weekly from five Indian cities, including double daily services from Delhi and three from Mumbai. Doyle noted that India is the airline's largest market outside US, employing around 2,500 people in the country.

As part of its growth strategy, British Airways will reintroduce first-class seats on the Mumbai-London Heathrow route from 27 October, marking the return after five years. Doyle expressed optimism about the burgeoning middle class in India, forecasting a rapid recovery in travel demand.

With plans for more widebody aircraft and increased long-haul operations, British Airways is poised to offer comprehensive services from India, particularly for traffic destined for the United States

Additionally, Ahmedabad-based private aviation firm Dunes Air has announced its entry into the air charter business with the launch of its premium chartered services.

Dunes Air said it is also set to induct a Challenger jet into its fleet, enhancing its long-range and luxury offerings, and supporting the growing demand for premium aviation services. *– PTI*

HIGH-RISK GAMBLING

'Illegal sites targeting vulnerable groups'

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Aggressive financial incentives and rapid-fire betting products offered by illegal online gambling platforms are drawing vulnerable users, including minors and those at risk of addiction, into high-risk gambling at unprecedented rates.

These platforms, unburdened by the 28 per cent GST and TDS deductions that legitimate operators must levy, lure users with more attractive payouts and instant-gratification games banned on regulated sites, reveals a report.

The report estimates that annual deposits are nearing USD 100 billion in these illegal platforms.

The report, "Fixing the Odds: A Policy Blueprint for Curbing Illegal Online Gambling in India," published by CUTS International, showed that illegal gambling operators are exploiting regulatory loopholes to target young adults, high spenders, and individuals especially susceptible to gambling harms.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

CUTS International's analysis estimates over 5.4 billion visits to the top 15 illegal gambling platforms and their mirror sites in just one year, underscoring the scale of the problem.

Unlike slower, skill-based games permitted on licensed platforms, illegal sites feature fast-paced betting products that enable multiple wagers within minutes -- an approach that research links to higher rates of addictive behaviour and financial loss among users.

These platforms also bypass consumer protection measures by requiring little to no documentation, making it easier for minors and vulnerable individuals to participate. The report notes that aggressive marketing, including surrogate advertising and extensive use of private messaging and outdoor campaigns, further amplifies the reach of these sites. *—PTI*

'India needs to be watchful of any trade diversion risk'

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

India needs to be watchful of any increased risk of trade diversion into the country due to changing global tariffs, top steel industry executives said reacting to the tariff-related announcement by the US.

Major steel players JSW Steel and AMNS India said there is a need to implement necessary trade measures proactively as every country is protecting their industry.

US President Donald Trump on Friday told Pennsylvania steelworkers that he would double the tariff on steel imports to 50 per cent to protect their industry, a dramatic hike that could further increase prices for a metal used to make housing, autos and other goods.

In a post later on his Truth Social platform, he said aluminum tariffs would also be doubled to 50 per cent, and both tariff hikes would go into effect Wednesday.

Sharing his views, the industry leader said there is likely to be increased risk of trade diversion into India due to changing global tariffs. India is vulnerable given its strong domestic demand. The industry need to be watchful on imports, there is no doubt about that, he said.

Earlier, Tata Steel CEO T V Narendran had said not imposing the protection measures for a prolonged period of time can impact the industry's investment plans, and impact on cash flows can adversely impact capex decisions. *– PTI*

PHOTO: X

Buongiorno to miss Italy's opening WC qualifiers

DUBAI, 1 JUNE

Italy will be without defender Alessandro Buongiorno for the upcoming World Cup qualifiers against Norway and Moldova, the country's football federation said on Sunday. Napoli centre-back Buongiorno has failed to recover from a thigh injury in time for Italy's opening matches in Group I and has been replaced by Fiorentina's Luca, who has never played for the senior national team. Coach Luciano has a 27-man squad for the first two matches of the qualifying campaign —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Ahlawat struggles in third round but stays within top 30

SALZBURG, 1 JUNE

Veer Ahlawat played a round of even par with three birdies and as many bogeys to finish the third day of the Austrian Alpine Open presented by SalzburgerLand tied 28th in the standings. Marcel Schneider of Germany continued to lead the field, heading into the fourth and final day at 15-under after a third round of 66. Ahlawat began his round on the front nine, making consecutive bogeys on the third and fourth holes before gaining back a shot on the fifth hole and then claimed back the second lost stroke on the ninth hole. It was his third birdie in as many days on the ninth.—*PTI*

Scheffler moves into lead as Bhatia slips to 23rd

DUBLIN, 1 JUNE

Akshay Bhatia slipped down the leaderboard with two double bogeys on the moving day at the Memorial, even as World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler was at his best with a 4-under 68 that took him to the top. Bhatia slipped with an 8-over 80 that saw him drop to T-23, down 20 places from his overnight third place. Scheffler opened with 13 straight pars and then had four birdies in the last four holes for a 68. He is now 8-under for three days and leads by one over Ben Griffin (65-72-72) and by two over Nick Taylor (69-68-74).—*PTI*

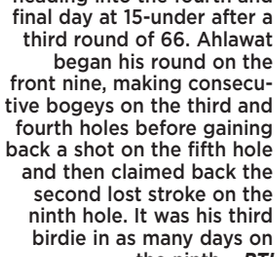


PHOTO: X

Lilly to retire after upcoming Toyota National will be final

WASHINGTON, 1 JUNE

American three-time Olympic swimming star Lilly King has announced the upcoming Toyota National Championships in Indianapolis will be her final meet on U.S. soil as she prepares to call it a career after the 2025 season. The meet will run from Tuesday through Saturday. A long-time breaststroke stalwart, King announced her plans Saturday on Instagram and said swimming her final race in the U.S. in her home state and a pool she's known since her youth "has always been important to me." "Well, folks, my time has come. This will be my final season competing," she wrote.—*PTI*

PSG routs Inter to win first CL title

Desire Doue, the 19-year-old French forward, is emblematic of the club's new generation

MUNICH, 1 JUNE

At long last, the club that was transformed by Qatari billions and bought and sold a succession of the world's greatest players in an extravagant bid to get to the top has got its hands on the big one.

European club soccer's grandest prize has a new home after PSG thrashed Inter Milan 5-0 in Saturday's final in Munich. "It's in the bag, it's coming home with us to Paris tomorrow," coach Luis Enrique said. "My first day at the PSG campus, I said the ultimate goal was to fill the trophy cabinet. The only trophy missing was the Champions League. Here we have ticked that box."

It was the trophy that not even Lionel Messi, Neymar, or Kylian Mbappe could deliver to the French club. Luis Enrique has achieved it after overseeing PSG's shift from the era of Galactico signings to one of genuine team-building. Fitting then that Désiré Doué, the 19-year-old French forward, emblematic of the club's newgeneration, was the chief inspiration and player of the match as PSG recorded the biggest win in a final in the competition's 70-year history. In a scintillating performance, Doué scored two goals and set up another goal in little over an hour on the field before being substituted. Achraf Hakimi, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, and substitute Senny Mayulu all scored around Doue's double in a game in which PSG could have run out an even bigger winner.

Desire Doue

Paris Saint-Germain players celebrate after routing Inter Milan to win the UEFA Champions League title

PHOTO: X / @PSG_ENGLISH

Inter Milan feels the pain of another Champions League final defeat

Inter Milan's heroics against Barcelona make its record Champions League final defeat to Paris Saint-Germain all the more disappointing for the Nerazzurri.

Inter staged an improbable comeback to beat Barcelona 7-6 over two pulsating semifinal legs. But there was no sign of that audacity or confidence on Saturday in Munich, where PSG romped to a 5-0 victory for the biggest winning margin in a European Cup final. "It shouldn't overshadow the season we've had. You just need to think of the journey we've been on in the Champions League," said Inter president Giuseppe Marotta, whose team also knocked out Feyenoord and Bayern Munich.

Exuberant PSG fans celebrate title with police on alert

Paris erupted with flares and fireworks, car horns and an Eiffel Tower glittering in blue and red to celebrate Paris Saint-Germain's first Champions League title.

The final in Munich was watched all over Paris, including inside PSG's Parc des Princes stadium, which beamed the match on a giant screen, and Inter Milan getting blown away 5-0 prompted flashpoints and some arrests even during the game.

Outside the stadium, there was a brief altercation during the first half between celebrating PSG fans cracking off flares, and riot police who used tear gas to disperse them.

At the top of the Champs-Élysées avenue, a water cannon was used to protect the Place de l'Étoile, near the landmark Arc de Triomphe. Police said a large crowd not watching the match tried to push through a barrier to make contact with police. —*PTI*

PSG coach pays tribute to deceased daughter

It was a memorable night for Paris Saint-Germain as they dismantled Inter Milan 5-0 to clinch the coveted and their maiden Champions League title on Saturday. Inter were simply no match for the French club, who recorded the biggest victory by any team in the final in the 70-year history of the European Cup and Champions League. After already winning the French Cup and Ligue 1, PSG also completed a historic treble with a Champions League triumph. Apart from this, it was a memorable yet emotional moment for PSG coach Luis Enrique, who received a terrific tribute from the fans regarding his late daughter.

Gukesh loses again as Erigaisi upsets Nakamura

STAVANGER, 1 JUNE

Reigning world champion D Gukesh's roller-coaster ride continued with the Indian suffering a defeat in an Armageddon tiebreak as he slipped to tied-fifth place, while Arjun Erigaisi upset American world No.2 Hikaru Nakamura to maintain his fourth position in Norway Chess.

Defending champion Magnus Carlsen continued to shine on Saturday, taking his points tally to 9.5 following his Armageddon tie-break victory against another American GM, Fabiano Caruana, with black pieces. On a day when the tournament delivered gripping action across all boards, all three games in the 'Open' category ended in draws, with the Armageddon tie-break being applied to break the deadlock. In a match where fortunes swung wildly, Chinese GM Wei Yi was winning in the middlegame, while Gukesh, playing with black pieces —*PTI*

Arjun Erigaisi

Kunlavut Vitidsarn celebrated becoming the first man from Thailand to top the badminton world rankings by winning the Singapore Open

PHOTO: X

Singapore Open: Kunlavut seals crown in style

SINGAPORE, 1 JUNE

Kunlavut Vitidsarn celebrated becoming the first man from Thailand to top the badminton world rankings by winning the Singapore Open in style on Sunday.

The 24-year-old demolished China's unseeded Lu Guangzu 21-6, 21-10 in just 37 minutes with his range of powerful smashes and deceptive drop shots.

Paris Olympics silver medallist Kunlavut will replace another Chinese player, Shi Yuqi, as world number one in a landmark for Thai badminton.

It was his fourth title this season. "There will be pressure to be the best player in the world, but it's going to be a good pressure as that will give me the added motivation of doing my best to win all the tournaments I take part in," said Kunlavut, who lost the Paris final to Viktor Axelsen. —*PTI*

BOXING: DEEPAK, NAMAN CLINCH GOLD

BANGKOK, 1 JUNE

Deepak and Naman Tanwar won gold medals in their respective categories as Indian boxers ended their campaign at the Thailand Open 2025 with eight medals.

Deepak clinched the gold with a 5:0 win over Abdurakhimov Javokhir of Uzbekistan in the 75 kg category, while Naman got the better of China's Han Xuezhen 4:1 in the 90kg final.

In the women's 80+kg final, Kiran went down 2:3 against Kazakhstan's Yeldana Talipova in a keenly fought bout to settle for a silver.

Also returning home with bronze medals are Tamanna (51kg), Priya (57kg), Sanju (60kg), Saneh (70kg), and Lalfakmawii Ralte (80kg), who came up with strong performances to finish on the podium."It's a clear sign that the systems we've put in place are working. —*PTI*

FRENCH OPEN

Paul becomes first American man to reach quarters in 22 years

PARIS, 1 JUNE

World number 12 Tommy Paul blitzed Australian Alexei Popyrin 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 on Sunday to become the first American male player to reach the French Open quarter-finals in 22 years. Paul matched Andre Agassi's run from 2003 after Americans on Saturday equalled a 40-year-old record with five women and three men in round four of the clay court Grand Slam.

Paul also became the only active American player to reach the last eight on all three surfaces after his 2023 Australian Open semi-final and 2024 Wimbledon quarter-final runs. "I am very happy to get a straight sets win.

Bopanna-Pavlasek pair knocked out

India's Rohan Bopanna and his partner Adam Pavlasek fought tooth and nail before being knocked out from the French Open by second seeds Harri Heliovaara and Henry Patten, here Sunday.

The unseeded Indo-Czech pair lost 2-6, 6-7(5) to Heliovaara from Finland and British player Patten, ranked three and four in the world, respectively, in the pre-quarterfinals.

The 17-year-old Dhamne had entered the main draw as a qualifier. He could not play to his potential on Sunday.

Svitolina stuns Paolini

Elina Svitolina saved three match points to eliminate last year's runner-up Jasmine Paolini and book her place in the quarterfinals at the French Open on Sunday.

The 30-year-old 13th seed roared back to upset the world number four 4-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-1 in their last-eight tie."I still cannot believe that this match finished my way," said Svitolina.

"It was a really difficult match today, Jasmine was playing well. Svitolina will next face either triple-defending champion Iga Swiatek or former Wimbledon winner Elena Rybakina for a spot in the semifinals.

Iga Swiatek extends bid for a 4th title in a row

Iga Swiatek turned things around at Roland-Garros after dropping eight of the first nine games against 12th-seeded Elena Rybakina in the fourth round Sunday, putting together a 1-6, 6-3, 7-5 victory to extend her bid for a record fourth consecutive French Open championship. The big-serving and hard-hitting Rybakina, who won Wimbledon in 2022, got off to a stunning start, leading 5-0 after less than 20 minutes and grabbing 24 of the initial 32 points. She was responsible for 10 of the match's first 12 winners.

"I needed to do something to get back in the match and, honestly, with her playing like that, I didn't have a lot of hope," Swiatek said afterward. There was more of the same early in the second set, when Rybakina went up a break, Swiatek double-faulted to close the first game, then turned to her team in the stands with her palms up and said something, and led 2-0. —*PTI*

Elina Svitolina

Iga Swiatek

Tommy Paul

Messi's brilliance continues with 2 goals

FORT LAUDERDALE, 1 JUNE

Inter Miami was in a midseason slump just a week ago. Lionel Messi made sure it didn't last long.

Messi scored for the fifth time in three Major League Soccer matches to help Inter Miami rout the Columbus Crew 5-1 on Saturday night for its second straight win.

Messi played a role in each of Miami's goals. He scored twice in the 15th and 24th minutes, giving him 10 goals this season, which leads his team and is tied for third in MLS. He set up Tadeo Allende's goal in the 13th, Fafà Picault's in the 89th, and was also involved in Luis Suarez's score in the 64th.

That makes it two straight matches that the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner has recorded at least two goals and an assist. His 16 goal contributions are the most in the league. "I see him every game. We see the same thing," Miami coach Mascherano said through an interpreter. —*PTI*

VERSTAPPEN RIGHT BEHIND

Piastri and Norris to start Spanish GP

MONTMELO, 1 JUNE

Oscar Piastri will start the Spanish Grand Prix from pole position ahead of McLaren teammate Lando Norris on Sunday with the papaya-colored cars poised to continue their early dominance of the Formula 1 season.

Defending F1 champion Max Verstappen will start from third and will be hard pressed to extend his winning streak at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya to a fourth win in a row.

Piastri leads Norris by three points at the top of the points standings after they won six of the eight races so far this year. Verstappen, who has won the other two races this year, is 25 points off Piastri's lead in his Red Bull.

Mercedes' George Russell and Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton will start fourth and fifth.

Piastri won from pole position in China and Bahrain, while he also pipped a pole-sitting Verstappen to win in Saudi Arabia and Miami.

His only blemish was losing to Verstappen after taking pole in Imola two rounds ago. Norris arrives after winning the Monaco GP last weekend. Fernando Alonso will be the only Aston Martin entry after Lance Stroll withdrew due to pain in his hand and wrist.

Verstappen's teammate Yuki Tsunoda will start from last place after a disastrous qualifying session for Red Bull's second driver. —*PTI*

Lando Norris, Oscar Piastri and Max

PHOTO:@MAX33VERSTAPPEN